

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 7-9, 13, 16 and 18; amend Claims 1, 4-6 and 10; and add new Claims 19-24 as follows.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A vehicle air conditioning unit for a vehicle including a passenger compartment, the vehicle air conditioning unit comprising:

an air duct, through which air is blown into the passenger compartment;

and

a partition board[[,]] which partitions the air duct in its inside into a first air passage and a second air passage, the partition board defining a first portion, a second portion and a stepped portion disposed between the first and second portions, the first portion being generally parallel to the second portion, wherein:

temperature of air in the first air passage and temperature of air in the second air passage can be separately controlled;

the air duct has a recess on its one side;

an air conditioning device is disposed in the recess; and

the stepped portion of the partition board is deformed in a manner similar to the recess in the air duct so that a cross-sectional area of the first air passage and a cross-sectional area of the second air passage remain approximately equal.

2. (original) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 1 further comprising:

a first air outlet formed in the first air passage;

a second air outlet formed in the second air passage;

an air outlet switching door, which simultaneously controls openings of the first air outlet and the second air outlet; and

a drive means for driving the air outlet switching door, wherein the air conditioning device is the drive means.

3. (withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 1 further comprising:

an evaporator disposed inside the air duct and cools air blown into the passenger compartment; and

a heater core, which is disposed inside the air duct and heats the air blown into the passenger compartment, wherein the vehicle air conditioning device is one of a refrigerant piping connected to the evaporator and a hot water piping connected to the heater core.

4. (currently amended; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 1 wherein the stepped portion of the partition board is deformed to have a recess similar to the recess in the air duct.

5. (currently amended; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 2 wherein the stepped portion of the partition board is deformed to have a recess similar to the recess in the air duct.

6. (currently amended; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 3 wherein the stepped portion of the partition board is deformed to have a recess similar to the recess.

7.-9. (cancelled)

10. (currently amended) A vehicle air conditioning unit for a vehicle including a passenger compartment, the vehicle air conditioning unit comprising:

an air duct having a side wall through which air is blown into the passenger compartment; and

a partition board substantially parallel to the sidewall which partitions the air duct in its inside into a first air passage and a second air passage, the partition board defining a first portion, a second portion and a stepped portion disposed between the first and second portions, the first portion being generally parallel to the second portion, wherein:

temperature of air in the first air passage and temperature of air in the second air passage can be separately controlled;

the air duct has a first recess in the sidewall;

an air conditioning device is disposed in the first recess; and

the stepped portion of the partition board has a second recess opposite to the first recess so that a cross-sectional area of the first air passage and a cross-sectional area of the second air passage are approximately equal in the vicinity of the first and second recesses.

11. (previously presented) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 10 further comprising:

a first air outlet formed in the first air passage;

a second air outlet formed in the second air passage;

an air outlet switching door, which simultaneously controls openings of the first air outlet and the second air outlet; and

a drive means for driving the air outlet switching door, wherein the air conditioning device is the drive means.

12. (previously presented; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 11 wherein the shape of the second recess of the partition board substantially corresponds to the shape of the first recess.

13. (cancelled)

14. (previously presented; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 10 further comprising:

an evaporator disposed inside the air duct and cools air blown into the passenger compartment, and

a heater core, which is disposed inside the air duct and heats the air blown into the passenger compartment, wherein the vehicle air conditioning device is

one of a refrigerant piping connected to the evaporator and a hot water piping connected to the heater core.

15. (previously presented; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 14 wherein the shape of the second recess of the partition board substantially corresponds to the shape of the first recess.

16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 10 wherein the shape of the second recess of the partition board substantially corresponds to the shape of the first recess.

18. (cancelled)

19. (new) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 1, wherein the partition board has at least two stepped surfaces parallel with each other in an air flow direction due to the stepped shape.

20. (new) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 10, wherein the partition board has at least two stepped surfaces parallel with each other in an air flow direction due to the stepped shape.

21. (new) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 1, wherein the recess in the air duct defines a recess wall generally parallel with an outside wall of the air duct in an air flow direction.

22. (new) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 10, wherein the first recess in the air duct defines a recess wall generally parallel with the side wall of the air duct in an air flow direction.

23. (new; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 1, wherein the stepped portion defines a stepped wall generally parallel with the first and second portion.

24. (new; withdrawn) A vehicle air conditioning unit according to claim 10, wherein the stepped portion defines a stepped wall generally parallel with the first and second portion.